



What's New in Kentucky

Arts & Culture

Louisville Zoo unveils new Mural – The Louisville Zoo debuted a new mural at its entrance that features a series of animals. The piece was a partnership between the Zoo and an art collective called Often Seen Rarely Spoken. The mural took a week to complete and involved meticulous planning and collaboration between the artists and zoo staff. https://www.wdrb.com/news/louisville-zoo-unveils-new-mural-created-by-local-artists/article_d2c1592e-4f99-11ef-920d-d743156d1ad6.html
<https://www.wave3.com/2024/07/31/louisville-zoo-unveils-new-mural-by-local-art-collective/>

Kentucky Derby Museum opens new exhibit showcasing 150 years of Derby fashion — In July 2024 the Kentucky Derby Museum opened “See & Be Seen: 150 Years of Derby Fashion” to the public. The exhibit features 32 ensembles dating back to the 1860s as well as fashion artifacts. <https://www.wave3.com/2024/07/10/kentucky-derby-museum-opens-new-exhibit-showcasing-150-years-derby-fashion/>

New Frazier History Museum exhibit celebrates all 120 Kentucky counties – In March 2024, the Frazier History Museum debuted a new exhibit called 120 Cool KY Counties. The exhibit is the result of a huge collaboration between the museum and all 120 Kentucky Counties. 120 Cool KY Counties features stories, pictures and artifacts from each county in one location. <https://www.leoweekly.com/arts/frazier-history-museums-120-cool-ky-counties-16074432>

Visit Frankfort introduces Guided Art Tours – The Frankfort/Franklin County Tourist and Convention Commission offers guided walking tours that showcase public art in historic downtown Frankfort. On these hour-long tours visitors will learn about the many art pieces featured in the area and the artists who created them. Tours are offered on Fridays at 2 p.m. in May, June, September and October. <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:571454db-631a-3024-bec2-58519e7062d2>

Take a Bourbon and History tour in downtown Frankfort – The Frankfort/Franklin County Tourist and Convention Commission wants you to immerse yourself in the Kentucky Capital’s spirited past as a local guide leads you on a mile long journey as you hear the lesser-known tales of Frankfort. Tours are offered on Mondays and Tuesdays from May through October 8. <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:c24cfafb-df4f-355a-b93f-9bb59268efba>

50-foot-tall alien named Clive installed on Covington parking garage – Covington has a new public art installation in the form of a 50-foot-tall alien dubbed Clive. The extraterrestrial can be seen hanging out of the Midtown Parking Garage on Fifth and Scott Street studying anyone who passes under him with his magnifying glass. <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/entertainment/2024/01/24/50-foot-tall-clive-alien-towering-over-covington-kentucky/72338298007/>

New mural on Purple People Bridge combines iconic symbols from both sides of the river – Cincinnati based artist Matt Grote has completed a mural on the Purple People Bridge which connects downtown Cincinnati and Newport on the Levee. The mural, which is on the floor of the bridge, celebrates both Kentucky and Ohio and their respective cultures. The Purple People Bridge is only open to

pedestrians and spans the Ohio River between the two cities.

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2023/12/01/people-purple-bridge-mural>

Bernheim Forest installing new large-scale outdoor art experience – Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest is opening a new art experience called L+A+N+D, which stands for Landscape + Art + Nature + Design, the exhibit will feature large-scale outdoor installations that explore the human connection to nature, sustainability, climate change, and other environmental issues and will open to the public Fall 2024. <https://www.wlky.com/article/clermont-bernheim-forest-outdoor-art-experience/44385559>
<https://www.lpm.org/news/2023-08-03/a-new-immersive-art-experience-grows-just-off-the-path-at-bernheim>

Attractions

New Kentucky Black History Trail Uses Augmented Reality — The Kentucky Black History Trail is a new collaborative project between six Kentucky counties that uses augmented reality to bring Kentucky's Black history to life. Visitors can use their mobile devices to experience holograms of Kentucky historical figures at more than six sites across the region. <https://www.lpm.org/news/2024-07-23/historical-black-kentuckians-tell-their-stories-in-new-augmented-reality-experience>
https://www.thenewsenterprise.com/news/local/hardin-part-of-multi-county-award-to-establish-state-black-history-trail/article_4af0b36b-ab55-5705-a036-847c93d58fcf.html

Kentucky After Dark Trail adds more spooky attractions across the state – With 21 stops across the state, Kentucky After Dark is a trail and passport program that promotes some of Kentucky's favorite haunted locations and stories. Some of the locations for the trail's second season include Somerset's International Paranormal Museum, Waverly Hills Sanatorium in Louisville and the Anderson Hotel Haunted House in Lawrenceburg. <https://long-weekends.com/articles/fallwinter-2024/kentucky-after-dark-trail/> <https://www.southernliving.com/kentucky-after-dark-7973329>

Louisville Zoo adds several new animals – The Louisville Zoo has welcomed several new critters over the last few months. In July the zoo's Sumatran tiger gave birth to a cub. The facility also began fostering a baby gorilla from another zoo in Seattle. In June they introduced two koalas from San Diego as part of a breeding agreement with Australia. <https://www.wlky.com/article/louisville-new-zoo-baby-tiger-cub-sumatran-when-how-see/61741170> <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/2024/06/05/louisville-zoo-introduces-two-koalas-to-kentucky/73919658007/> <https://www.leoweekly.com/news/say-hello-to-the-louisville-zoos-adorable-baby-gorilla-16738718>

Kentucky Derby Museum updates Winner's Circle exhibit, adds new fashion exhibit and receives grant to upgrade 360 film– The Kentucky Derby Museum is updating its Winner's Circle to commemorate the 150th Derby winner, Mystik Dan. The museum's front lobby banner and 18-minute 360° movie, "The Greatest Race", have been updated to include Mystik Dan's photo finish. The museum also announced the Derby Fashion Exhibit, set to debut in July 2024. Guests will experience the vibrant colors, glamour and humor of Derby fashion through the years. Additionally, the museum was awarded the \$1 million James Graham Brown Foundation Grant that will support an update of the museum's 360° feature film, "The Greatest Race." <https://www.lanereport.com/174092/2024/06/kentucky-derby-museum-completes-derby-150-updates-to-winners-circle-exhibit/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20Greatest%20Race%E2%80%9D%20%E2%80%94%20Kentucky,Museum's%2040th%20anniversary%20in%202025.>

Kentucky Derby Museum debuts a \$1 Million upgrade to iconic Riders Up! exhibit – The Kentucky Derby Museum will unveiled the \$1 million upgrade to its Riders Up! exhibit in April 2024, just in time for the 150th Kentucky Derby. Introduced in 2000, The Riders Up! exhibit lets visitors get a taste of what it feels like to be a jockey during the Run for the Roses. The upgrade process started in February and when it is complete, the exhibit will captivate visitors with state-of-the-art technology that brings the thrill of horse racing into the 21st century. <https://www.wlky.com/article/kentucky-derby-museum-riders-up-exhibit-reopening/60468419> <https://paulickreport.com/news/the-biz/kentucky-derby-museum-gallops-into-future-with-1-million-riders-up-exhibit-upgrade>

Louisville Zoo adds new polar bear to the family – The Louisville Zoo announced the addition of Borealis, or Bo for short, to the facility’s award-winning Glacier Run exhibit. Bo is one of two polar bears at the facility. Qannik, a wild-born female, has resided at the zoo since 2011. With the addition of Bo allows for the zoo to join the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, a cooperative breeding program that works to ensure the continuation of threatened and endangered species. <https://www.wave3.com/2024/02/16/meet-bo-louisville-zoo-announces-latest-polar-bear-addition/>

National Corvette Museum announces new sinkhole exhibit – February 2024 marked a decade since a massive sinkhole opened up under the building, swallowing eight cars from the museums multi-million-dollar collection. On the anniversary of the sinkhole, the museum announced the opening of a new exhibit examining the disaster, as well as the aftermath. The exhibit, dubbed “Ground to Sky: The Sinkhole Reimagined”, will feature the cars that were in the sinkhole, which includes the one-millionth Corvette that has since been fully restored by General Motors. The exhibit will run throughout summer 2024, June 14 through September 15. <https://www.wkyufm.org/news/2024-02-13/national-corvette-museum-announces-new-exhibit-on-anniversary-of-sinkhole>

Churchill Downs purchases 20-acres in Owensboro for future gaming facility – Churchill Downs Inc. subsidiary Ellis Entertainment paid \$1.6 million for 20-acres in Daviess County to build a 68,000-square-foot gaming facility. The site, which is located on the corner of U.S. Highway 60 East and Wrights Landing Road, will feature 700 gaming machines, retail sportsbook, simulcast wagering and multiple food and beverage offerings. is expected to be open between January and March 2025. <https://cdcgaming.com/churchill-downs-lays-out-development-slate/>

Sandy's Racing & Gaming opens for business in Ashland – Sandy's Racing and Gaming cut the ribbon on a brand new 40,000 square-foot facility that features more than 700 gaming machines. The center also has entertainment stages, a sportsbook lounge and dining options. In addition to the \$75 million gaming center, construction of an equestrian center and Kentucky’s only quarter horse racetrack. Both projects are projected to be finished in 2025. <https://wchstv.com/news/local/sandys-racing-gaming-set-to-open-oct-26-in-ashland-boyd-county-kentucky-tax-revenue-entertainment-sports-betting-dining-quarter-track-horse-equestrian-tri-state>

Railbike tours offered along Bluegrass Scenic Railroad – Rail Explorers, a railbike tour company, has opened a new location in Versailles. The 10-mile round-trip tour takes riders through two thoroughbred farms, between limestone cliffs, to the Kentucky River with views of a bourbon distillery and Young’s High Bridge. Riders may choose the Quad Railbike (up to four riders) or Tandem Railbike (up to two riders) option. The tour is pet-friendly and pets ride for free. <https://www.lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/railbike-tours-offered-along-bluegrass-scenic-railroad>

New Social Hall Added to Whiskey Row – Number 15, a new “social hall” in downtown Louisville opened in May. Located in the historic W.L. Weller building on Main Street features five floors of bars, live music, event spaces and a penthouse. <https://www.wlky.com/article/whiskey-row-number-15-downtown-louisville/45211526>

Bourbon

*See the separate document, [What's New in Kentucky Bourbon](#), for a list of new and expanded bourbon experiences.

Culinary

Silver Dollar in Louisville gets new owner and new menu - The Silver Dollar, a Louisville institution, is reopening under new ownership. Brian Downing, the new owner and general manager, is making changes to the restaurant, including a refreshed menu focused on Tejano cuisine. The restaurant will also boast a curated whiskey and bourbon list, alongside innovative cocktails.

<https://www.leoweekly.com/food-drink/louisvilles-iconic-silver-dollar-gets-a-new-owner-and-refreshed-menu-16739405>

High Stakes Grill, new rooftop restaurant, opens in Louisville – Located on the roof of the new Tempo by Hilton Louisville Downtown NuLu, High Stakes Grill offers fine dining and a fine view from its perch six stories up. In addition to an extensive menu consisting of high-end surf and turf entrées, High Stakes features a full bar and wide-ranging cocktail list. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/dining/restaurant/2024/07/26/high-stakes-grill-new-rooftop-restaurant-opens-downtown-louisville/74372484007/>

Log Still Distillery opens high-end restaurant in downtown Louisville - Log Still Distillery celebrated the grand opening of its restaurant and tasting room experience, Monks Road Boiler House, on Whiskey Row in downtown Louisville. Named after the distillery's flagship line of bourbons and gins, Monk's Road Boiler House embodies the rich history and craftsmanship of Log Still Distillery, providing guests with an immersive and nostalgic dining experience. <https://www.leoweekly.com/louisville/a-new-chophouse-from-well-known-distillery-is-now-open-on-louisvilles-whiskey-row/Slideshow/16592190>

Western Kentucky Wine Trail launches - The Western Kentucky Wine Trail is a new collaborative initiative from area tourism offices that launched June 6. Christian, Graves, Logan, Marshall, McCracken, and Warren County tourism offices have brought together nine area wineries to create an official wine trail in Western Kentucky. <https://www.wbko.com/2024/06/12/area-tourism-offices-team-up-launch-western-kentucky-wine-trail/>

New West Kentucky BBQ Belt campaign launches – Kentucky Tourism has unveiled a new campaign aimed at promoting the fantastic barbecue in the western part of the Commonwealth. As part of the outreach, there are social videos, digital ads and billboards, placed in barbecue hotbeds like Nashville, Memphis, St. Louis and Kansas City. <https://www.adweek.com/agencyspy/kentucky-tourism-curates-a-west-kentucky-bbq-belt-collection/>

Kentucky Capital finalizes plans for a \$150 million mixed-use development project – Frankfort, Kentucky is getting its first Target store as part of a \$150 million development project. Once built, “The Paddocks of Frankfort” will spur economic development, boost tourism and, most of all, provide a new shopping and entertainment experience for locals and tourists. The 128,000-square-foot store is expected to be a major draw for the area and create over 1,000 jobs. Governor Andy Beshear, Mayor Layne Wilkerson, and other officials celebrated the project, which is the largest in the city and county's history. <https://www.lanereport.com/174135/2024/06/target-store-coming-to-frankfort-150-million-project-expected-to-support-over-1000-jobs/>

The Brown Hotel hires a new executive chef for its historic restaurant – The Brown Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky has hired Gary Palm as their new executive chef. Palm has over 30 years of experience working in five-star hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants around the world. He is a graduate of Johnson & Wales University and completed an apprenticeship in France. The Brown Hotel expects Palm to inspire and develop their culinary team. <https://www.whas11.com/article/life/food/louisville-brown-hotel-new-executive-chef-gary-palm/417-1cf6699c-3997-4558-a6f3-86b7e824ebcb>

Louisville Chef celebrates the opening of his second restaurant in two years – Chef and Louisville native Shaquan McDonald opened a new Shaq Kitchen at 2300 W. Market St. to go along with the original location at 612 S Fifth St. His menus consist of a mix of classic American fare such as burgers, sandwiches and barbecue. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/dining/restaurant/2024/05/10/chef-shaq-kitchen-opens-second-restaurant-in-louisville-what-to-know/73590309007/>

Southern Kentucky Distillery Joins The Moonshine Trail – The first legal distillery in Cumberland County has just joined the Moonshine Trail. Founded in 2022, Southern Kentucky Distillery has worked to revitalizing the region's storied distilling tradition, embodying the spirit of innovation while honoring age-old techniques. Moonshine Trail consists of eight distilleries and four landmarks in eastern Kentucky and is designed to inspire tourists to travel the region and experience its unique culture and history. <https://www.prunderground.com/southern-kentucky-distillery-joins-the-moonshine-trail-connecting-history-heritage-and-high-spirits/00336272/> <https://www.wkms.org/business-economy/2023-11-16/moonshine-trail-looks-to-get-tourists-eyes-on-eastern-kentucky-through-local-history-culture>

The Burl music venue and arcade starts brewing beer too – Located in Lexington's Distillery District, The Burl opened as a live music venue in 2016. In 2018 they added an arcade that featured dozens of pinball machines, retro video games and Skee-Ball. In February 2024, The Burl debuted its craft beer line, Burl Brew. Located on the Burl's campus next to the concert hall and arcade, the microbrewery taproom will feature more than a dozen unique taps as well as a full cocktail bar. The Burl campus is also planning a new food option, Lucy's Kitchen, which will offer a fresh twist on favorite bar fare. <https://extoday.6amcity.com/food/the-burl-brew-lexington-ky>

New Indian-Mexican fusion restaurant opens in Louisville – In December 2023, Louisville welcomed a new Indian-Mexican fusion restaurant to the Audubon Park neighborhood. Tikka Tacos on Preston Street features entrees such as the Bollywood Taco, which is a mixture of chicken tikka and avocado piled high on to Indian paratha flatbread. The menu boasts a healthy mix of fusion and traditional Indian dishes at a more than reasonable price point. <https://www.leoweekly.com/food-drink/indian-mexican-treat-yourself-to-both-at-tikka-tacos-15811901>

West Kentucky Brewery Hop trail launches a digital pass – The Kentucky craft beer trail known as West Kentucky Brewery Hop debuted its new digital pass on National American Beer Day. The downloadable pass offers an engaging and interactive platform for craft beer aficionados to explore the rich brewing culture of the region. By downloading the digital pass and visiting each brewery included on the trail, users can unlock exclusive merchandise and the chance to win exciting prizes, all while savoring the finest brews that West Kentucky has to offer. <https://www.craftbrewingbusiness.com/business-marketing/west-kentucky-brewery-hop-trail-launches-a-digital-pass-promising-prizes-to-users/>

White Squirrel Brewery cuts the ribbon on its facility – White Squirrel Brewing tapped the keg on its new facility in the Shake Rag District of Bowling Green. Specializing in a wide variety of ales, the White Squirrel opens at 3 p.m. on weekdays and 11 a.m. on weekends. In the coming months the brewery owners plan to add a beer garden, space for food trucks and live music. <https://www.wbko.com/2023/09/26/white-squirrel-brewery-welcomes-over-1500-guests-opening-weekend/>

Horses

Tickets for Keeneland's Fall Meet now on sale - Keeneland has announced that tickets for its Fall Meet are now on sale. Fans can purchase tickets through Keeneland's official website. Running from October 4-26, tickets must be bought ahead of time. Cash and walkup purchases are not accepted at the main gates on race days. <https://www.wlky.com/article/webb-telescope-spots-six-rogue-worlds-within-a-glowing-cosmic-cloud/61985431> <https://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/279117/rich-purses-turf-races-highlight-keeneland-fall-meet>

Kentucky Downs' Annual Meet Begins – Located in Franklin, Kentucky Downs hosts seven days of racing from late August to early September. It is the only European-style course in the United States and hosts only one meet a year. With one of the highest purses, and most unique courses in America, Kentucky Downs' all turf meet attracts some of the biggest names in horseracing. <https://www.kentucky.com/sports/horses/article291489940.html>

Steeplechase Horse Of The Year Andi'amu Retired To Kentucky Horse Park Hall Of Champions – 13-year-old champion steeplechase horse Andi'amu has retired from active competition and will reside to the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky. The Thoroughbred will be the first steeplechase horse to reside at the park's Hall of Champions barn. The Hall of Champions houses other living equine legends such as Accelerate and Roy H and they put on a parade parade for Horse Park visitors twice a day between April through November. <https://paulickreport.com/horse-care-category/steeplechase-horse-of-the-year-andiamu-retired-to-kentucky-horse-park-hall-of-champions>

Churchill Downs completed \$200 million in paddock renovations ahead of 150th Kentucky Derby – Churchill Downs unveils a completely revamped paddock for Kentucky Derby 150. The new space is bigger, grander, and offers premium seating with close-up views of the horses. Construction took nearly 2 years and cost \$200 million. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/events/kentucky-derby/2024/04/24/churchill-downs-200m-paddock-renovation-ahead-of-kentucky-derby-150/72522916007/>

Keeneland Race Course Plans \$93 Million in Upgrades – The world famous Keeneland Race Course in Lexington announced a \$93 million project that make improvements to the paddock, visitors' center and operations building. The new paddock building will expand viewing and dining experiences, enhance hospitality during Keeneland's Thoroughbred auctions and provide new venues for special events year-round. Construction is scheduled to be completed in fall of 2025. <https://www.sportstravelmagazine.com/keeneland-race-course-plans-93-million-in-upgrades/>

Kentucky Horse Park building New Barns – Construction will begin in Fall 2024 on two 100-stall pavilions at Kentucky Horse Park, replacing old barns. The new barns will maximize the number of stalls and provide ample access for trailers and exhibitors, and includes new restrooms, muck pits and more. The barns are on track to be finished by May 2025. <https://eventingnation.com/coming-soon-to-kentucky-horse-park-new-barns/>

Derby City Gaming Downtown facility opens for business– Derby City Gaming Downtown, the first major gaming center in downtown Louisville, officially opened in December 2023. Located at the corner of Fourth and Market streets, the 43,000-square-foot building features 500 of the latest historical horse racing machines, a "fresh-air gaming area" and three bars, each with a unique theme. There will also be a Churchill Downs gift shop. <https://www.wlky.com/article/derby-city-gaming-downtown-open-louisville-sports-gambling/46052309>

Hotels & Lodging

Historic Mallard Hall debuts as luxury lodging – After extensive renovations Mallard Hall, located in Fisherville on Shelbyville Road, has reopened as a luxury vacation rental and event space. Originally built in 1790 this estate features seven bedrooms, eight bathrooms, pool, heated flooring and a helipad.

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/home-garden/home-of-the-week/2024/01/18/mallard-hall-in-fisherville-kentucky-features-speakeasy-helipad/71934653007/>

<https://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2024/05/28/extensive-renovation-turn-historic-property.html>

Developers plan to build 27-floor high-rise hotel in downtown Louisville - The 300-room hotel would feature a rooftop bar, first-floor restaurant and more. In the company's release, it highlights "One Forty West" would be located a short distance from the Kentucky International Convention Center, KFC Yum! Center and across the street from another Zygo co-developed site, the forthcoming Canopy by Hilton hotel. Construction is slated to begin in 2026 and completed by 2028.

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/07/03/louisville-based-zygo-proposes-high-rise-hotel-one-forty-west>

Hyatt Regency in downtown Lexington approved for massive renovation – The Hyatt Regency, located just steps away from Rupp Arena in downtown Lexington was received preliminary approval for incentives for a potential \$66 million renovation. The 17-story hotel was built in 1977 and would be eligible for incentives up to \$16.5 million. <https://www.aol.com/major-66-million-renovation-proposed-142855136.html>

Canopy by Hilton set to open in downtown Louisville by the end 2024 - The \$75 million, 168-room hotel is scheduled for completion in late 2024 and will comprise a steakhouse, a rooftop restaurant and bar and a state-of-the-art fitness center with a press juice bar. The hotel will also more than 5,100 square feet of meeting space, including a rooftop ballroom with floor-to-ceiling windows offering expansive views of Louisville. <https://usa.boutiquehotelier.com/canopy-by-hilton-downtown-louisville-opening/>
<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2024/07/11/canopy-by-hilton-downtown-louisville-announces-bourr-bonne-steakhouse/72788343007/>

Tempo by Hilton opens in Louisville's NuLu neighborhood – Tempo by Hilton opened for business just in time for the 150th Kentucky Derby. This full-service hotel, located on East Jefferson Street in NuLu, offers several amenities, including a rooftop restaurant, meeting space, wellness rooms and events spaces. https://www.wdrb.com/news/business/tempo-by-hilton-opens-in-nulu-just-in-time-for-kentucky-derby-150/article_6870db12-0804-11ef-9ab9-8b6519e95edd.html

The Lodge at Mammoth Cave reopens after renovation – After two years of being closed for renovation, the Lodge at Mammoth Cave reopened to the public in January 2024. The Lodge, which was built in 1965 received upgrades to its rooms, lobby, giftshop and restaurant. It also remodeled for ADA-accessible rooms, a conference room and two public restrooms. https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/the-lodge-at-mammoth-cave-reopens-after-renovation/article_8bbdd009-7f6e-54e1-98e3-df4320e80096.html

Spa opens in the historic Galt House Hotel – [The Pelo West](#) salon and spa has opened for business on the 17th floor of the legendary [Galt House Hotel](#) in downtown Louisville. This luxury spa will offer hairstyling and color, massages, facials, nails and sauna services. It is open seven days a week and appointments can be booked through the spa website. <https://loutoday.6amcity.com/business/pelo-west-opens-louisville-ky>.

New cabins shaped like bourbon barrels available for booking – A new type of lodging experience has popped up in Lawrenceburg. Bourbon Barrel Retreats offers bourbon enthusiasts a chance to stay in cabins shaped like oversized barrels. The seven barrels sit on a 50-acre property just minutes away from more than a dozen distilleries, including, but not limited to: Four Roses, Woodford, Buffalo Trace and Makers Mark. <https://gardenandgun.com/articles/wake-up-in-a-bourbon-barrel-in-rural-kentucky/>

Jimmy Buffett Margaritaville resort hotel coming to Northern Kentucky – A Margaritaville Hotel and Resort is set to be built in Newport, Ky. Named after the famous song written by the late Jimmy Buffett, the \$133.6 million hotel will sit on the banks of the Ohio River and feature 264 full-service rooms, several restaurants, bars and retail shops. To drive the laidback theme home, there will be 5 O’Clock Somewhere Bar and a pool on the 12th-floor that overlooks downtown Cincinnati. The resort is expected to be completed by fall 2026. <https://www.kentucky.com/news/state/kentucky/article279569624.html>

Family entertainment complex coming to Simpson County – Gov. Andy Beshear announced funding for a massive family entertainment facility in Simpson County. The Dine and Play Social House will be a 45,000 square-foot facility that features a bowling alley, an arcade, mini golf, axe throwing, and indoor and outdoor social game areas complete with ping pong, billiards and fowling as well as rentable event space and a restaurant. Additionally, it will attach to a full-service Hampton Inn hotel. The complex is expected to be open by 2026. <https://www.wnky.com/33-8m-project-to-bring-the-dine-and-social-play-house-to-simpson-county/> <https://www.lanereport.com/168791/2023/10/33-8-million-tourism-development-project-coming-to-simpson-county/>

Derby City Hotel Under Construction in Downtown Louisville – The 168-room Derby City Hotel is open in the heart of downtown Louisville on the corner of Second St. and Market Street. The hotel will operate under the Canopy by Hilton. In addition to lodging, Derby City will also feature a ground floor restaurant and rooftop bar and eatery. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2023/08/25/derby-city-hotel-canopy-hilton-under-construction-downtown-louisville/70587905007/> https://www.wdrb.com/news/business/new-renderings-show-planned-60-million-hotel-at-2nd-and-market-streets-in-downtown-louisville/article_60730364-e2d4-11ed-8e4d-cb4bd7ce9dda.html <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/events/kentucky-derby/2024/04/10/louisville-hotels-and-kentucky-derby-myriad-hotel-tempo-by-hilton/72486011007/>

Myriad hotel opens in Louisville – The Myriad, a new 65-room boutique hotel located at 900 Baxter Avenue, and its onsite restaurant, Paseo, are open and accepting reservations. The facility includes a swim club complete with a lounge pool, cabana rentals and a poolside bar. <https://www.whas11.com/article/news/local/the-myriad-boutique-hotel-baxter-avenue-highlands-opening-soon/417-e4e71d74-460e-4d05-acb0-cdb974057a2e>

Bardstown Motor Lodge opens in bourbon country — This mid-century-inspired hotel, located at 418 East Stephen Foster Ave., is unmistakably authentic. Guest rooms flow seamlessly into breezy outdoor spaces with welcoming fire pits, a swimming pool, poolside bar, and a retro-styled rec room. The motel is on the same property as the hugely popular fine dining restaurant, Toogie’s Table. <https://www.whas11.com/article/news/community/bardstown-motor-lodge-kentucky-community-common-bond-hotel-collection/417-eb434317-023c-43ef-a64a-0bb5f7b2bd14>

North by Hotel Covington, Knowledge Bar & Social Room open – After months of anticipation, North by Hotel Covington and Knowledge Bar & Social Room are officially open to the public. Construction on the 72,000-square-foot building began in the spring of 2022. The space, which sat vacant since 2015, was the previous home of the Covington YMCA and Gateway Bookstore. In total, North added 53 luxury suites and lofts to Hotel Covington. Additionally, a new ballroom with a 500-person capacity was built over top of the YMCA’s old swimming pool. Dubbed The Lightwell, this space honors its past as a natatorium with traditional pool tile, cove lighting and a contrasting color scheme. <https://linknky.com/business/openings-closings/2023/04/11/north-by-hotel-covington-knowledge-bar-social-room-celebrate-grand-opening/>

The Manchester hotel opens in Lexington – This new downtown Lexington hotel, located at 941 Manchester St., not only treats its guests to a restful stay, but also to beautiful architecture and decor. Interior designer Jenny Bukovec drew on all the best bits of Kentucky history and culture for Lexington’s The Manchester – which hosts guests in rich wood- and brick-lined interiors. <https://thespaces.com/manchester-hotel-lexington-ky/>

Crown Plaza Hotel Getting Big Renovation – The Crowne Plaza Louisville Airport, Kentucky’s fourth largest hotel, will see a \$25 million expansion and refresh scheduled to be completed by Summer 2024. The project involves remodeling all 588 rooms in the eight-story Crowne Plaza, which sits on state-owned land leased from the adjacent Kentucky Exposition Center. The Schneider Co. also plans to add a bar to the lobby, replace the hotel restaurant called Blue Horse with a new concept and to remake all of the event spaces. <https://www.meetingsnet.com/destination-venue-news/big-louisville-hotel-getting-big-renovation>

Hotel Genevieve Opens in NULU – The Hotel Genevieve is open for business in downtown Louisville on East Market Street. This 122-room boutique hotel features a ground floor restaurant, Rosettes, and Bar Genevieve which is situated on the hotel’s rooftop. The view from the roof gives guests a spectacular view of downtown Louisville. https://www.wdrb.com/news/business/hotel-genevieve-opens-in-nulu-bringing-something-different-to-louisvilles-entertainment-scene/article_eb84f5f8-ef58-11ed-841c-67a8f8af2ab4.html

Woodspring Suites opens in Bowling Green – Extended stay is here to stay in the Bowling Green lodging landscape. Less than four months after David Chandler announced plans for an extended-stay SpringHill Suites by Marriott in his The Hub development along Lovers Lane, Pennsylvania-based Posh Properties opened a 122-room Woodspring Suites hotel near Cumberland Trace Road and Scottsville Road in April 2024. https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/woodspring-suites-coming-to-bowling-green/article_5de29131-b57f-5991-923a-3f5bb64afb36.html

Music

Bourbon & Beyond 2024 set for September - 100 acts are set to perform across five stages at the Highland Festival Grounds at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville Sept. 19-22. Bands performing include Sting, Beck, Ole, and Koe Wetzel. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/2024/08/27/bourbon-and-beyond-2024-performance-set-times-locations/74954165007/>

Big Names in the World of Heavy Metal set to Perform at Louder Than Life – More than 140 acts are scheduled to play on five stages over the course of a weekend at the 2024 Louder Than Life Festival, September 26-29. Bands set to play include Slayer, Motley Crue, Slipknot and Korn. <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/02/21/louder-than-life-unveils-2024-lineup>

Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Mount Vernon Tourism to host annual Kentucky Blues Music Festival – The Kentucky Music Hall of Fame is hosting the second annual Kentucky Blues Music Festival on Saturday, June 22 at 5 p.m.. This year will feature 2022 HOF Inductee Tee Dee Young, Rachel Crowe Band, and Donovan Howard. The event will take place at the amphitheater behind the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame. <https://www.kentuckyliving.com/event/kentucky-blues-music-festival-2>

America’s River Roots festival to celebrate the Nations’s 250th Anniversary– Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati are planning a massive festival to celebrate the Nation’s 250th Anniversary, October 9-12, 2025 as well as the culture and heritage of the regions on both sides of the Ohio River. The festival will feature performers on multiple stages along both sides of the river, tall stacks riverboat cruises, and educational programs, celebrity chef presentations, bourbon and craft beer tastings, multicultural food vendors, and regional food artisans. <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/05/03/america-s-river-roots-festival>

New LouGrass series to showcase free, live bluegrass music – Bluegrass music is Kentucky music. In an effort to highlight Louisville’s connection to Kentucky’s original musical genre, From May through October, River City music venues, bars, hotels, restaurants and special events will host the weekly performances, giving guests an opportunity to sample a variety of the city’s hospitality settings. <https://www.gotolouisville.com/media/news-stories/free-lougrass-series-showcases-kentuckys-authentic-genre/> <https://www.gotolouisville.com/lougrass/?page=2>

Outdoors

Pikeville has been certified as a Trail Town – Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear announced that the city of Pikeville has been certified as a Trail Town, making it the 29th locality to achieve the designation. Trail Town certifications are given to towns that make a public commitment to share its outdoor opportunities, culture, history and stories with visitors seeking adventure. <https://wchstv.com/news/local/pikeville-gets-kentucky-trail-town-certification-recognized-for-outdoor-tourism>

Cave Country Trails revamps website to connect visitors to nature near Mammoth Cave – The purpose of Cave Country Trails is to create a regional network of biking, hiking, equestrian, and water trails to connect communities and make the Mammoth Cave Area and South-Central Kentucky a more attractive outdoor destination and place to live. This initiative promotes healthy lifestyles while attracting visitors and new businesses, managed with local flavor, resulting in regional economic growth. https://ket.org/program/kentucky-edition/non-profit-offers-resources-to-give-people-a-tailor-made-mammoth-cave-adventure/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR2HFP6FITpLqpZkaGFzFMMy9ULxsDVrYVQuXwNc-GrheV8qpB3uvnBssZfl_aem_AUYkDLnZrY_EOdiSetmqtsPB2Kdeuii0oPAObZZibGtQy74dHDZOqNMNkEL28PjpNqGv2C_9lkiEzhKv8KbytN9y <https://cavecountrytrails.com/about-us/>

Seven Kentucky state parks featured in newly-launched online Kentucky Science Trail – The Kentucky Science Trail, an online guide to science attractions in the Bluegrass State, features seven Kentucky State Parks, including: John James Audubon, Jenny Wiley, Cumberland Falls, Natural Bridge, Wickliffe Mounds, Carter Caves and Big Bone Lick. Each attraction has a description and link to its website, as well as an interactive map, making it easy for visitors to find nearby attractions. https://www.floydct.com/news/seven-kentucky-state-parks-featured-in-newly-launched-online-kentucky-science-trail/article_f1539e2e-1227-11ef-a8a6-2f0ab971767f.html

Kentucky State Parks celebrate 100 years – 2024 marks 100 years since it was established in 1924. In that time the department has dedicated itself to preserving the natural and historical sites throughout the commonwealth for future generations, while opening 45 state parks. The celebration will take place throughout the year, all over the Bluegrass State. <https://www.lex18.com/news/kentucky-state-parks-celebrate-100-years-in-2024>

Other

Kentucky Tourism Industry sets record for second year in a row with \$13.8 billion in economic impact – The Kentucky tourism industry generated nearly \$14 billion in economic impact and sustains nearly 100,000 jobs. Bourbon tourism is a particularly flourishing area, and visitors spent \$9.7 billion in Kentucky in 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/kentucky-tourism-21502d059324c537cf3886e8e2411abb>

New passport program highlights Horses, Horsepower and Hollers attractions across six counties – “Horses, Horsepower and Hollers” is a new initiative aimed at giving visitors an authentic Kentucky experience. By using one of the itineraries on the initiative website, tourists can visit places unique Kentucky destinations such as National Corvette Museum and Cumberland Falls State Park. If they register for the digital pass they can track their visits to earn points and be entered into a sweepstakes. <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/04/04/kentucky-tourism-initiative-horses-horsepower-hollers-> <https://www.kytripleh.com/>

Louisville Tourism opens new welcome center at the Muhammad Ali International Airport –

Louisville Tourism has opened a brand new information hub inside the region's busiest airport. The center provides a dedicated space to learn about the great things to do, variety of local restaurants and top attractions throughout the community, including all things bourbon.

<https://www.futuretravelexperience.com/2024/04/welcome-center-opens-at-louisville-muhammad-ali-international-airport-for-a-best-in-class-arrivals-experience/>

Great Big Kentucky Adventure Campaign highlights attractions through retro videogames –

The Great Big Kentucky Adventure allows players to take control of one of many characters and make your way through levels themed around different Kentucky attractions. The game features cities all over Kentucky such as Cave City, Frankfort, Hopkinsville and many more.

<https://www.wnky.com/great-big-kentucky-adventure-features-attractions-in-south-central-ky/> <https://www.wave3.com/2024/05/24/video-game-features-louisville-kentucky-tourism-destination/> https://www.wpsdlocal6.com/news/paducah-featured-in-new-video-game-featuring-kentuckys-tourism-destinations/article_330df452-1207-11ef-a17e-cb2c26e705d8.html

Louisville Tourism reopens newly renovated visitor center – The Louisville Visitor Center has reopened after renovations. The center now features a bourbon bar, Muhammad Ali memorabilia, and equestrian touches. Leaders from Louisville Tourism hope the new center will attract more visitors. The downtown center is open from 10 am to 5 pm Monday through Saturday and 12-5 pm on Sundays.

https://www.wdrb.com/news/business/tourism-officials-cut-the-ribbon-on-renovated-louisville-visitor-center-downtown/article_de98fcb2-1717-11ef-9eb9-6b6fc6bb812b.html

Blue Grass Airport institutes Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program –

Lexington's Blue Grass Airport in Kentucky has adopted the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program. This program allows travelers with hidden disabilities to discreetly signal that they might need additional assistance or patience from airport staff. Travelers can wear a sunflower lanyard or pin, and staff are trained to recognize these symbols and provide support.

<https://www.lex18.com/news/blue-grass-airport-institutes-hidden-disabilities-sunflower-program#:~:text=Blue%20Grass%20Airport%20instituted%20the,community%20relations%20manager%20Lauren%20Simmerman.>

Southeastern Kentucky debuts new Appalachian Triangle campaign –

In an effort to boost Southeastern Kentucky's visibility on the national tourism scene, eight counties and cities in the region have teamed up to form the Appalachian Triangle of Kentucky. The coalition includes, Rockcastle-Mt. Vernon, London-Laurel County, the city of Corbin, Whitley County, Bell County, Barbourville, Manchester, and the city of Harlan. The Visit ATKY website offers visitors a complete overview of the region's events, festivals, museums, lodgings and more.

<https://fox56news.com/news/kentucky/visit-the-appalachian-triangle-southeastern-kentucky-launches-tourism-campaign/>

New passport program, Kentucky Capitals Quest launches –

Visitors to Kentucky can earn a prize while learning about the Bluegrass State's diverse culture and heritage. The program features 11 "capitals" throughout the Commonwealth, such as the Corvette Capital in Bowling Green, the Batter Capital in Hopkinsville and the Muskie Fishing Capital in Morehead, to name a few.

<https://www.lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/new-passport-program-allows-visitors-to-explore-hidden-gems-across-kentucky>

Plans underway to bring Amtrak back to Louisville and Southern Indiana –

The city of Louisville received a \$500,000 grant to research the feasibility of building a 115-mile passenger rail corridor between Louisville and Indianapolis. Amtrak discontinued service to the area in 2003 and Louisville is currently the fourth largest metropolitan area without Amtrak. Officials say exploring the possibility of creating the rail line requires research into construction costs for new stations, ridership estimates, and safety upgrades for older train lines.

<https://www.lpm.org/news/2023-12-09/plans-underway-to-bring-amtrak-back-to-louisville-and-southern-indiana>

Louisville’s Muhammad Ali International Airport to offer direct international flights after renovations are complete – Louisville’s main airport announced that it will offer direct international flights once its \$400 million renovation is complete. The project will expand its security and TSA checkpoint and create space for U.S. Customs. Airport officials initially plan to offer flights to places like Mexico and the Caribbean and expand to Canada and Europe afterwards. So far the airport has replaced aging jet bridges and elevators, added a color-coded light system in parking garages, and modernized the airport’s operations center. Airport officials are beginning the second phase of the project which focuses on baggage claim and behind the scenes mechanical and electrical systems. The third and final phase will focus on airport security is slated to finish in 2027. <https://www.wlky.com/article/louisville-direct-international-flights/60013737> <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2023/07/21/inside-the-400m-sdf-next-transformation-at-louisvilles-airport/70391444007/>

New Joy Ride campaign encourages visitors to explore the bluegrass region via the backroads– Kentucky Tourism kicked off a new campaign that encourages visitors to get the most out of their trip through the bluegrass region by taking advantage of Kentucky’s backroads. By driving the backroads travelers will witness the state’s scenic beauty in the form of horse farms, distilleries, wineries, small towns, historic homes and so much more. <https://www.travelagentcentral.com/continental-united-states/kentucky-unveils-joy-ride-tourism-campaign>

Lexington gets highest rating again in Kentucky for LGBTQ rights; near top in country – Lexington has received the highest score in the state for its policies regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality, according to a nonprofit group that ranks cities on LGBTQ policies. Lexington received a score of 114, one of the highest of the 506 cities ranked by the Human Rights Campaign. That puts Lexington in the top 2% of the country. <https://www.kentucky.com/news/local/counties/fayette-county/article281846823.html>

Louisville maintains perfect LGBTQ inclusivity score – According to the latest Municipal Equality Index scores from the Human Rights Campaign, Louisville maintains it’s perfect score for LGBTQ inclusivity for the for the eighth year in a row. The HRC’s index examines each city’s inclusivity on a range of issues including non-discrimination laws, municipal services and law enforcement. Lexington and Covington also received perfect scores from 2023’s HRC index. <https://loutoday.6amcity.com/louisville-municipality-equality-index>

British Airways is now operating direct flights between London and Cincinnati – As of June 2023 British Airways is operating direct flights between London Heathrow Airport (LHR) and Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG). British Airways will operate the flights five times a week during the summer and four times a week during the winter. <https://nkytribune.com/2023/06/british-airways-offers-cvg-fliers-new-international-travel-choice-first-flight-has-arrived-from-heathrow/>

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